



CHILDREN'S CABINET

OCTOBER 21, 2020 ONLINE (VIA ZOOM)



EARLY CHILDHOOD UPDATE

CHIEF SCHOOL READINESS OFFICER JENNA CONWAY

Early Childhood Update

Virginia continues to build a unified office focused on ensuring every child has the opportunity to enter school ready. Here are current priorities:

1. Support programs and families with COVID 19 response and recovery
2. Unify Virginia's early childhood system at the Virginia Department of Education
3. Expand local community collaboration and build essential infrastructure through the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five,
4. Looking forward to 2021

COVID-19: Impact on Early Childhood Providers

Child care providers remain committed to serving children, families, and communities.

- Roughly two-thirds of 6,000+ providers in the Commonwealth are open as of 10/19/20.
- Another 927 programs have provided a date they intend to reopen.
- More than 80% of family day homes have remained open, providing an essential safety net.
- Approximately half of these open providers report making efforts to expand capacity to serve school-age children participating in virtual or hybrid learning.

Altogether, the ~2,000 closed providers represent a loss in capacity of 148,300 slots. One-third of these closed providers typically serve children in the child care subsidy program.

The pandemic has made it difficult for programs to remain economically viable.

- Child care providers report difficulty obtaining PPE and hygiene and cleaning supplies as well as recruiting and retaining qualified staff.
- Of more than 2,000 providers surveyed in the Commonwealth, 20 percent reported that their businesses could survive no more than 3 months at current enrollment without financial relief.

COVID-19: Impact on Early Childhood Providers

All VPI and Head Start programs have reopened although enrollment is down and many children are learning virtually. To support the field, Virginia is:

- Providing \$10 million in federal GEER funding to increase access to quality preschool.
- Producing guidance to support virtual preschool, virtual assessment, classroom observations during a pandemic, and emergency child care during virtual learning.
- Shifting professional development including training and coaching to virtual for school-based, Head Start and child care leaders and educators.
- Conducting “Cups and Conversations” and similar interactive events which highlight local solutions and best practices from the field.
- Participating in community-level webinars and meetings with local coalitions (e.g., Smart Beginnings) and supporting them to identify and address local challenges.

CARES Grants Offered Crucial Support

Virginia responded quickly to support child care providers and families using the CARES Act, allocating all funding as of 9/30. Virginia not only supported its child care assistance program, but also implemented a new relief program for all open programs.

Virginia has provided nearly \$47 million in direct cash assistance to open child care programs.

A total of 2,600 CARES I grants were issued, averaging \$9,022 per program.

As of 10/19, 1,804 CARES II grants have been issued, averaging \$12,082 per program.

Of providers surveyed in August that were open or planning to reopen in the next 60 days, 62% reported receiving the first round of CARES funding (April—June).

- 82% said payments were very or extremely helpful to staying open.

72% of providers surveyed reporting applying for grants during the second round. An additional 13% on the survey had not applied but intended to do so before the deadline.

New Emergency Funding for Child Care

On October 21, Governor Northam announced an additional \$58.3 million in federal coronavirus relief funding (CRF) as well as a reallocation of \$7.5 million in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds for a new total investment of \$65.8 million in child care relief.

Funding will enable Virginia to fund all eligible applicants from CARES II as well as implement CARES III to provide assistance to open child care programs through 12/31.

- Open child care programs who were eligible but did not receive CARES II will be first priority.

Funding will also support local public-private partnerships to increase access for school-age children who are participating in virtual learning.

- Working families are still struggling to find safe, supervised spaces for elementary and middle school students who cannot attend school in-person full-time.

Unifying Early Childhood

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of 5+ state agencies*, Virginia is on track to transition CCDF on 7/1/2021.

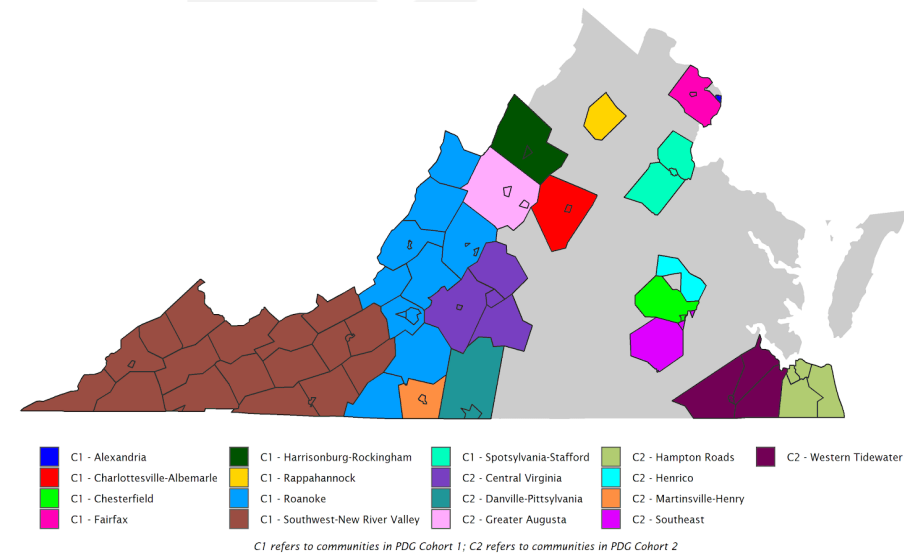
- Head Start Collaboration Office and Quality Staff moved to VDOE on 7/1/2020.
- Effective July 1, 2021, VDOE will be responsible for:
 - Developing and promulgating regulations related to the child care subsidy program; quality standards and supports; and health and safety standards;
 - Implementing and enforcing child care licensing regulations; managing licensing inspectors; training child care providers; and conducting health and safety inspections; and
 - Acting as the official Lead Agency for the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which supports child care assistance for low-income families and quality improvement activities across the system
- VDOE and VDSS are working together to develop and execute a series of MOAs to ensure a smooth transition of funds, policy and regulatory oversight, and 100+ licensing staff

Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five Expansion

Using its three year, \$33 million grant, Virginia continues to expand its PDG B-5 efforts statewide.

Each pilot has a lead organization that receives funding to:

- Build relationships across programs;
- Increase access for families and children;
- Strengthen quality of all programs; and
- Support family engagement.



Pilots are strengthening their systems and building models for other communities. A third cohort will join in 2021.

Using PDG B-5 to Build Essential Infrastructure

PDG pilot communities are laying the groundwork for a coordinated and unified early childhood system. **Key activities include:**

- Gathering accurate counts of children birth-5 served across different program types
- Coordinating enrollment across program types to reduce burdens for families;
- Observing and coaching educators using a common classroom observation tool (*CLASS*);
- Assessing effective methods to engage families;
- Promoting teacher retention through an educator incentive program; and
- Collecting uniform data across provider types and ages via a new unified data portal (*LinkB5*)

Looking Forward: Key Budget Considerations

To provide equitable opportunity for success, Virginia must increase access to quality birth-to-five early childhood care and education, including ensuring that all at-risk children have access to quality two-year preschool experiences that prepare them for kindergarten.

Here are four key early childhood budget considerations:

1. Restore key kindergarten readiness investments from 2020-2022 Biennial Budget;
2. Address inequities;
3. Diversify and strengthen workforce; and
4. Support a seamless recovery and transition.

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Thank you!

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Appendix: CARES Act Spending for Child Care

As of 10/19/20

Virginia responded quickly to support child care providers and families using the CARES Act.

Action	Allocated	Expended	Remaining
CARES Grants (issued in two rounds)	\$46,642,226	\$42,859,714	\$3,782,512
Paid absence days to closed vendors*	\$12,449,733	\$5,932,263	\$6,517,470
Co-payment waivers	\$3,707,450	\$3,714,540	(\$7,000)
Emergency school-based care**	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
Reimbursement rate increase for Level I subsidy providers (effective 7/1/20)	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$7,000,000
Total	\$70,799,409	\$54,506,427	\$18,292,982

* Unallocated funds for paid absence days will go towards additional CARES Grants, less \$7,000 for copayment waivers.

** Unallocated funds for school-based care will go towards other emergency care services.



HOME VISITING

EARLY IMPACT VA LAUREL APARICIO

HOME VISITING: COVID 19 RESPONSE

Immediate pivot to virtual connection with families (March 13, 2020)

Home Visiting = Essential **LIFELINE** for families

- Basic Needs (food, supplies, technology, housing, unemployment/benefits)
- Healthcare Access
- Emotional Support
- Healthy Interactions
- Stress Management

Successes:

- Increased engagement
- Parent leadership and confidence
- Engaging families in new ways
- Positioning the field for future application

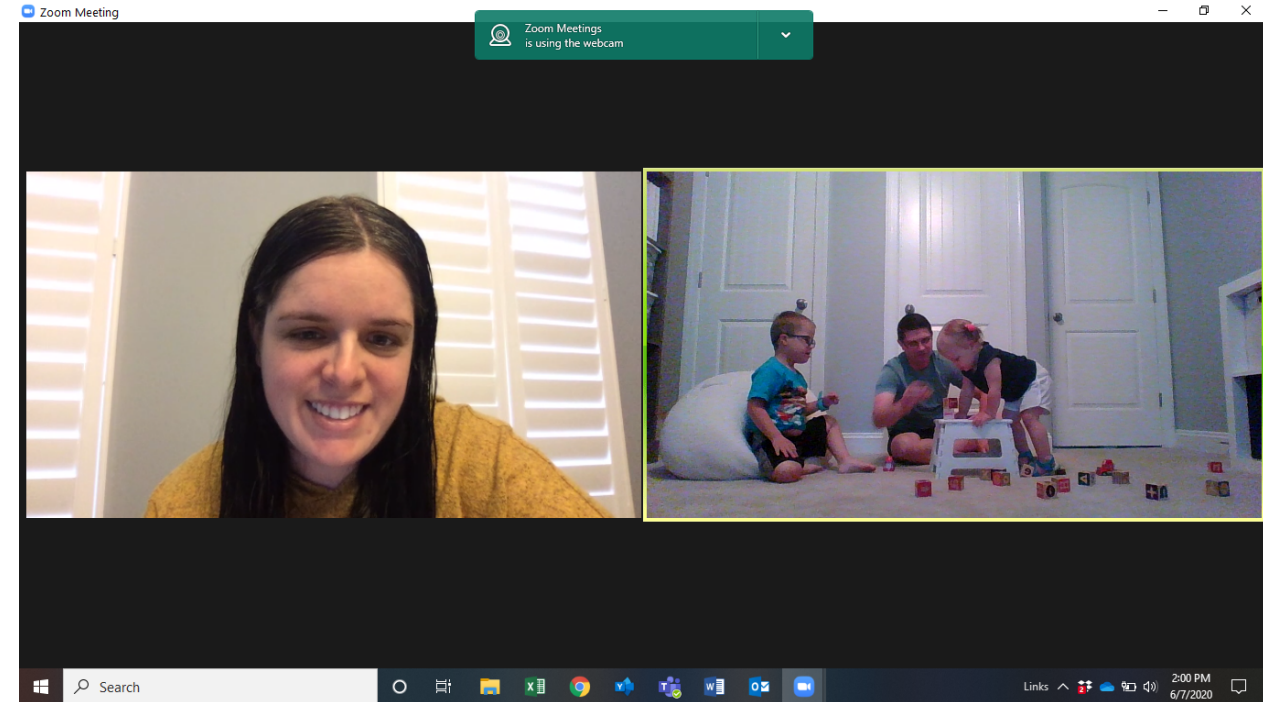
Challenges:

- Enrolling new families
- Technology access
- Zoom fatigue
- Human connection



SYSTEM RESPONSE TO COVID 19

- Cross agency/model messaging and support for local programs
- Statewide information and resource sharing
- Regional Peer Sharing and Self Care Sessions
- Extensive Virtual/Telehealth Training and Support: Weekly webinars and resource materials
- Transition to Virtual Training: Model Implementation and Emergent needs

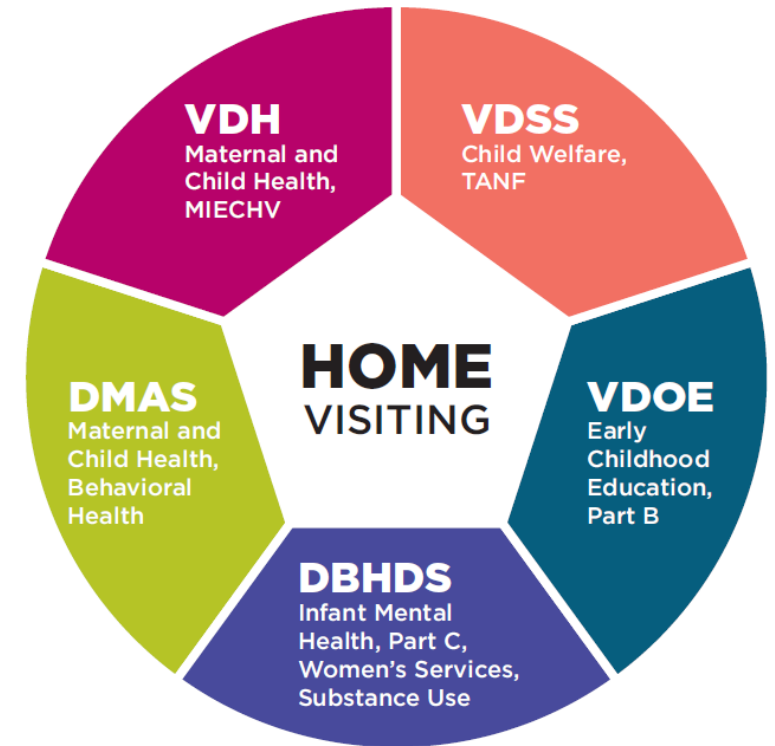


VIRGINIA'S PLAN FOR HOME VISITING: UPDATE

- ✓ Statewide Needs Assessment
- ✓ Community Readiness Toolkit

In Progress:

- ~ Strategic Plan
- ~ Home Visiting Medicaid Benefit





VIRGINIA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-RELATED TRAUMA

ADVISOR ON CHILDHOOD CHIDI UCHE
TRAUMA AND RESILIENCY

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NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION IMPROVING WELL-BEING & SUCCESS OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES ADDRESSING ACES LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

PURPOSE: 10-month learning collaborative designed to develop sustainable strategies to prevent and mitigate childhood traumas associated with ACEs officials to build sustainable, state-level approaches to prevent and mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

State teams will learn from model states and other national, state and local experts with support from the National Governors Association. Participating teams will develop and implement a state-specific strategic action plan (based on lessons learned at the convening and tailored to the unique needs of their own states) that drives cross-sector policy, programmatic, financing and evaluation approaches to prevent and mitigate the effect of ACEs.

VIRGINIA'S GOALS

- 1. ACEs Prevention and Mitigation due to COVID-19
- 2. Strategic Planning for Statewide Model of Care for Addressing Trauma
- 3. Support Virginia Social-Emotional Learning Standards and Subsequent Rollout

EDUCATION

- Recover, Redesign, Restart 2020
- Prioritization of social emotional skills, competencies, and supports for students, families, and educators
- Resources for educators and school support staff on indicators of child abuse through virtual teaching

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

- Sustain meaningful relationships between justice-involved youth and their families
- Increased emphasis on diversion processes, decreased detainments, and monitoring of youth in congregate care for release eligibility
- Training and education for youth on COVID-19 awareness, precautions and community resources
- Improving trauma-screenings for justice-involved youth

SOCIAL SERVICES & CHILD WELFARE

- Maintain partnerships with local DSS to ensure continuity of services and benefits to recipients
- Provide virtual family visitation opportunities for children and youth in foster care
- Assist young adults aging out of foster care (ages 18-21) with housing stipends and increased access to SNAP, WIC and unemployment benefits.



Addressing Adverse Childhood Experience Learning Lab

Considerations for the Virginia Children's Cabinet

October 21, 2020

Addressing Adverse Childhood Experience Learning Lab

- Four states competitively selected: Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wyoming
- Focus on mitigating COVID-19 related trauma
- Ten months of technical assistance (May 2020 – Feb 2021)
- Mary Rolando, who spearheaded innovative ACEs work in Tennessee, is a consultant to states in the Learning Lab

Virginia's Learning Lab Goals

- Develop a cross-systems plan for preventing and mitigating COVID-related ACEs for children and youth in Virginia.
- Develop a plan for transitioning Virginia Linking Systems of Care into a sustainable, statewide model of care for children, youth and families who have experienced trauma.
- Support Virginia Department of Education's social and emotional learning efforts.

Considerations for Education

1. Increase access to Trauma-Informed Care trainings
 - Texas, Illinois and Connecticut are providing free virtual trainings for child care providers during the period of the pandemic
2. For young children, use Social Stories to explain COVID
3. Use evidence-based screening procedures for ACEs more frequently
4. Prioritize social and emotional learning competencies
 - Three states are incorporating social and emotional learning strategies into school reopening plans and 16 Governors devoting federal CARES Act funding to social and emotion learning

Considerations for Juvenile Justice

1. Increase use of diversion procedures and early release
2. Provide additional phone calls and virtual visits for youth remaining in facilities
3. Increase use of screening procedures for adverse childhood experiences

Considerations for Social Services

1. Work towards rapid family reunification for youth in foster care
2. Promote in-person visitation
3. Focus on providing supports to families
 - New Jersey: effective foster care prevention model, with 200 families reunited since the beginning of the pandemic
4. Support well-being of social services workers: designate child welfare personnel as First Responders



Questions

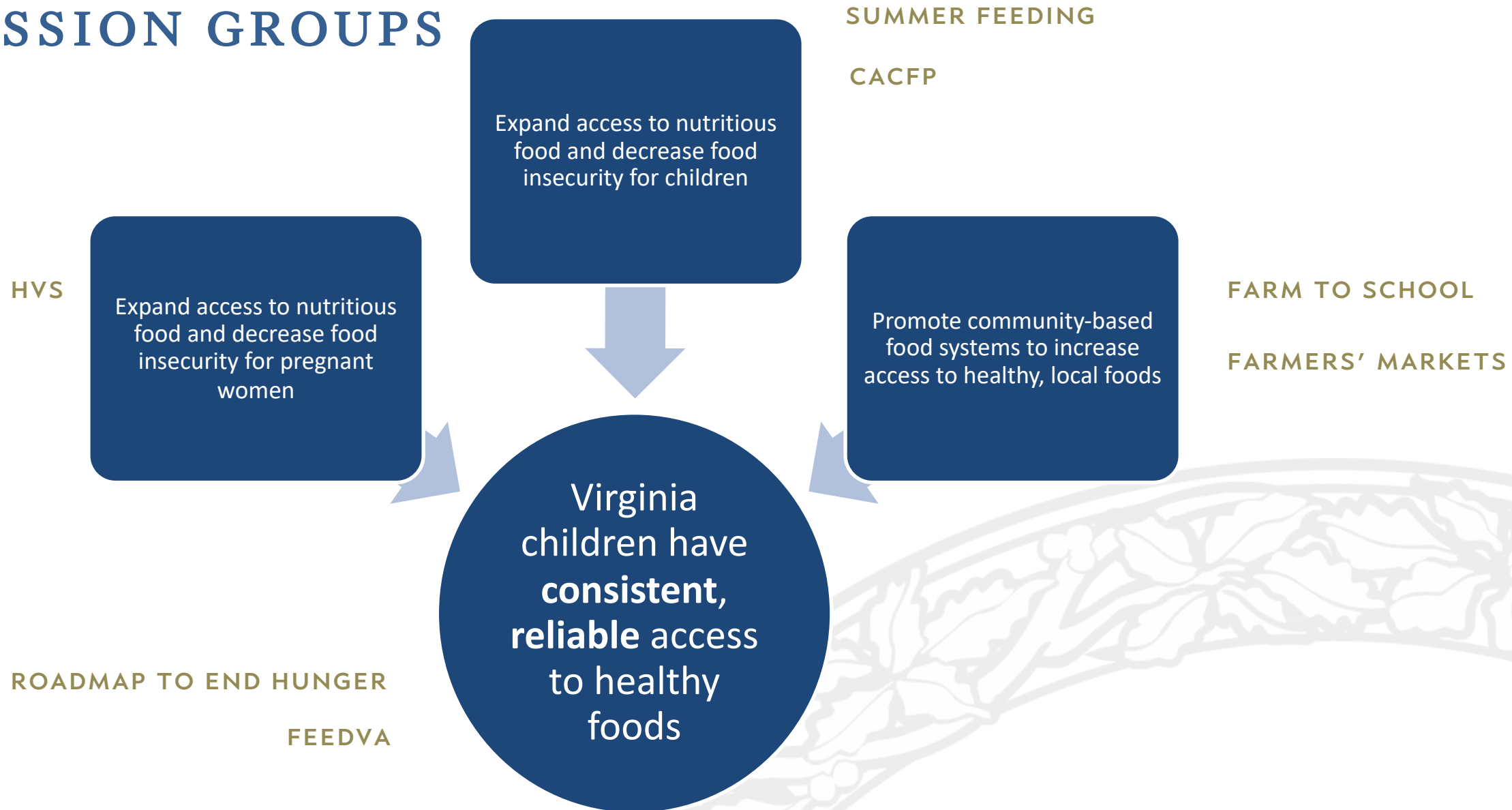


NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

HEIDI HERTZ MS, RD ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND
FORESTRY

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DISCUSSION GROUPS



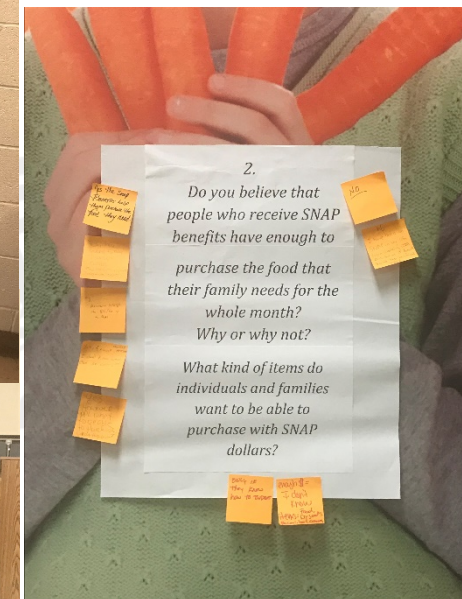
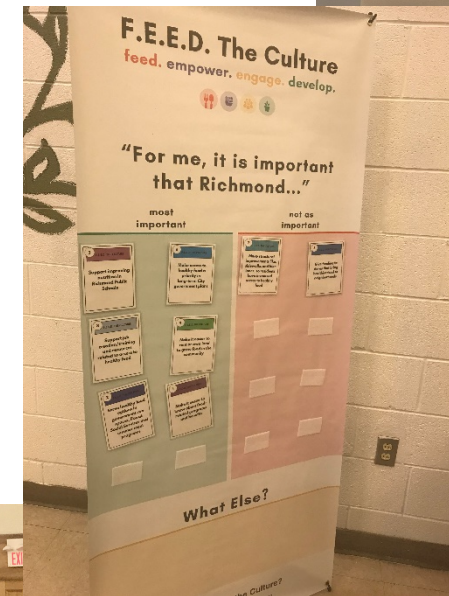
RELEASED OCTOBER 20TH

VIRGINIA ROADMAP TO END HUNGER



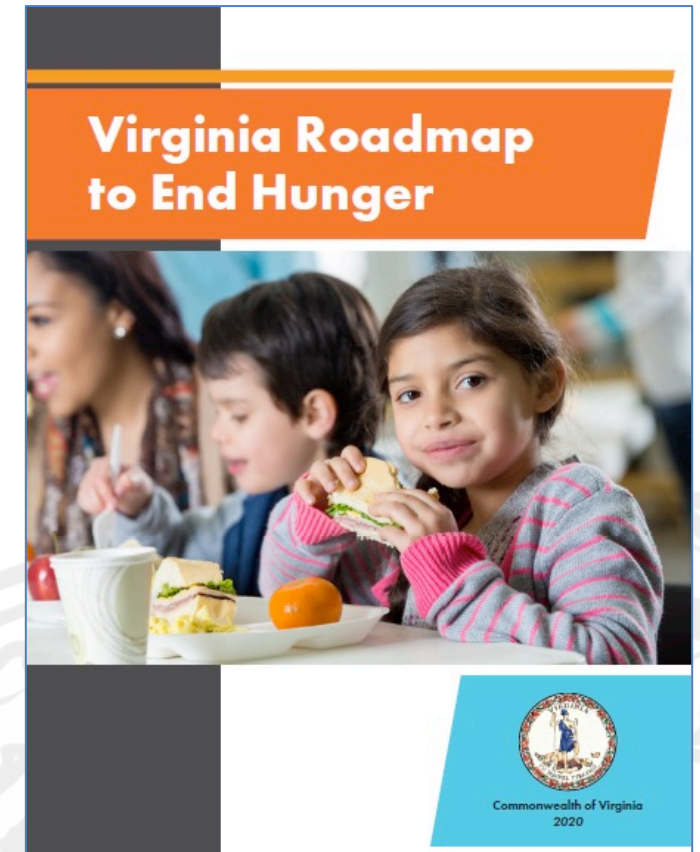
VIRGINIA ROADMAP TO END HUNGER

- At the October 2, 2018 meeting, the Children's Cabinet directed the Nutrition and Food Security working group to create a report
- Led town hall meetings to get input from key leaders, stakeholder groups, and community members who work within and are impacted by the food system.
- Meetings were held in seven locations- Abingdon, Roanoke, Danville, Hampton, Fairfax Co., Norfolk, and Richmond City.



VIRGINIA ROADMAP TO END HUNGER

- First of its kind, unified set of goals and strategies prioritizing food security across sectors, Secretariats, agencies, and programs
- Identifies the greatest opportunities to reduce food insecurity in Virginia and critical next steps to developing policies, programs, and partnerships that will benefit Virginia's children and communities.
- Emphasizes the importance of federal, state, and local policies and programs being in authentic partnerships with grassroots organizations and highlights the work of the Richmond Food Justice Alliance and Cultivate Charlottesville



ROADMAP GOALS

- Expand Child Nutrition Programs
- Increase Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women Infant and Children (WIC) Program
- Increase Nutrition Support for Seniors
- Grow Access to Local Food for Schools and Families
- Strengthen Connections Between Food Access Programs and the Healthcare Sector
- Encourage Food and Agriculture Investments in Food Deserts and Marginalized Communities
- Amplify Public Awareness of Hunger in Virginia and Support Information Sharing Across Public and Private Sectors
- Support Community organizing to combat food insecurity and hunger



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SPREAD THE WORD!

- Promote the Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger
- Sign up as a Hunger Action Coalition:
<https://feedva.org/connect/roadmap-to-end-hunger/>



FOOD ACCESS EFFORTS AND RESPONSE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC



HUNGER PROJECTIONS

Before COVID19:

850,000
food
insecure
Virginians,
250,000
children

Resulting from COVID 19:

445,000
MORE
food
insecure
Virginians

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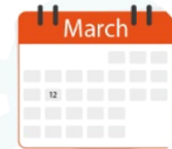
On March 7, 2020 the first case of COVID-19 in Virginia was announced



The pandemic led to unprecedented unemployment levels which increased the demand for statewide feeding programs



Swift and effective public-private collaboration and coordination across the Commonwealth



On March 12, Governor Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in Virginia



The collaboration and coordinated efforts helped meet the demands of food shortages across the state of Virginia

RENEWED COMMITMENT

- COVID 19 has renewed our commitment to ensuring that all Virginians have access to the food they need to grow and thrive.
- While we have all felt the stress of COVID 19, the most disastrous effects are magnified in communities already impacted by institutional poverty.
- Northam Administration has utilized CARES Act funds and GEER funds to assist feeding programs prioritizing students, families, and the need for low-touch, no-touch food distribution



STATE FEEDING TASKFORCE

Coordinate the implementation and expansion of food and nutrition programs to meet the demand during Virginia's response and recovery from COVID -19.

- VDOE: National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Service (SFSP) Child and Adult Care Food Program At-risk Afterschool Program (CACFP)
- VDSS: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Pandemic EBT
- VDH: Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Child and Adult Care Food Program for early care (CACFP)
- DARS: Senior Nutrition Program (SNP), Home-delivered Meal Services (HDM), Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs
- VDACS: The Emergency Feeding Assistance Program (TEFAP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSDP)
- Non-profits and community organizations: Food banks, Food pantries, Community kitchens, Meals on Wheels, National Guard, United Way, No Kid Hungry VA

VIRGINIA'S FOOD PROGRAM RESPONSE

- Unprecedented work by leaders to support children, families, and seniors to provide the needed food assistance and support
- Programs including school nutrition, SNAP, WIC, CACFP, senior feeding programs, food bank distribution, emergency feeding programs, and others utilized EVERY flexibility possible to meet the need
- Created and implemented an entirely new program, Pandemic-EBT



VIRGINIA'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

DATA MAP OF FOOD INSECURITY AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

[HTTPS://FEEDVA.ORG/CONNECT/](https://feedva.org/connect/)





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